



BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY TESTING

IMPORTANT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE USDA

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has recently undertaken an aggressive surveillance program to obtain data about the possible presence of BSE in the United States (U.S.). APHIS plans to test as many cattle as possible from the target population over a 12-18 month period. As a result, we will be looking to our partners in all segments of industry to notify us when they identify cattle that fit within the target population.

Our target population of cattle more than 30 months of age includes:

- Nonambulatory cattle;
- Cattle exhibiting signs of a central nervous system disorder, such as staggering, excess nervousness, or apprehension;
- Cattle exhibiting other signs that may be associated with BSE, such as emaciation or injury; or,
- Dead cattle.

We anticipate that the majority of samples in this target population will be collected at concentration points, such as rendering facilities. However, we will also be looking to obtain some samples from cattle producers if they identify cattle that fit these descriptions.

We realize that there is some concern among cattle producers about what would happen to their business if BSE were discovered in their herd. We want to provide as much information as possible about the process in order to alleviate those concerns and encourage participation.

CDFA Animal Health Branch Offices	
Sacramento (HQ)	916-654-1447
Modesto	209-491-9350
Ontario	909-947-4462
Redding	530-225-2140
Tulare	559-685-3500
USDA/APHIS/VS 916-857-6170 or 877-741-3690	



Based on what we know about the disease, the discovery of additional cases of BSE would not necessitate depopulating an entire herd. Instead, APHIS would conduct an investigation to identify individual animals that may have been exposed at a young age to the same feed as the affected animal.

The owners of the affected cattle would be compensated for any cattle taken as a result of the investigation. In addition, any quarantine of affected animals would be temporary and there would not be restrictions on the movement of milk or similar products.

Dr. Bill Wavrin, owner of the cow diagnosed with BSE in December of 2003, has been vocal about his particular experience in the wake of the discovery.

"While our experience with having a cow test positive (for BSE) was not without considerable stress, it did not do significant harm to our business," Wavrin said. "It did in fact provide great assurance that our industry is strong, our state and federal agencies charged with protecting our herds and our customers are able and committed, and our consumers are rational and loyal."

APHIS is committed to the success of the enhanced BSE surveillance program. Cooperation from cattle producers and other segments of industry is vital to providing consumers and trading partners increased assurances about the safety of the U.S. cattle population.